

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

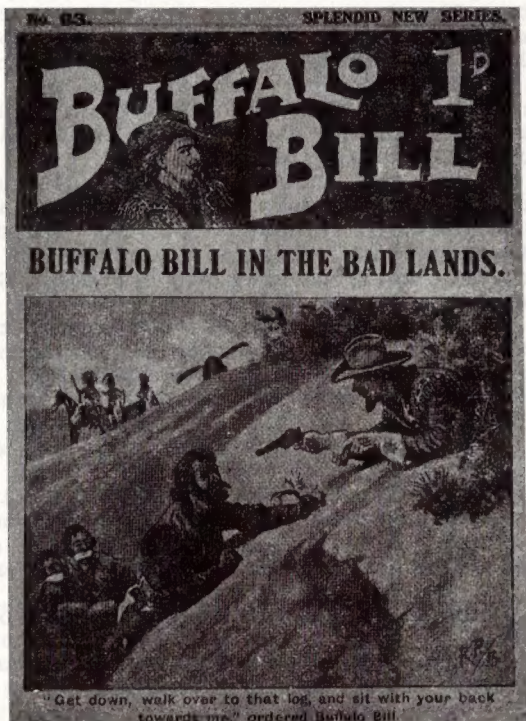
Vol. 57 No. 5

December 1988

Whole No. 594

THE SENSATIONAL STORIES AND DIME NOVEL WRITING DAYS
OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, HORATIO ALGER,
THEODORE DREISER AND UPTON SINCLAIR

By Lydia Cushman Schurman



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #234
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Publisher: Aldine Publishing Co. Crown Court, Chancery Lane, London, England. Issues: 701. Dates: 1911-1932. Schedule: 4 issues a month. Size: 7 x 5 1/4". Pages: 32 to 48. Price: 1d. Illustrations: Colored Pictorial cover. Contents: Buffalo Bill and other western stories reprinted from Beadle publications. Some new material by British authors also used.

THE SENSATIONAL STORIES AND DIME NOVEL WRITING DAYS
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By Lydia Cushman Schurman

(Note: This paper is from a work in progress. Schurman's book on the dime novel publishing world, 1860-1915, is scheduled for publication by Greenwood Press in 1989.)

There are four common themes which underlie the early writing careers of Louisa May Alcott, Horatio Alger, Jr., Theodore Dreiser, and Upton Sinclair during the periods they wrote sensational stories and dime novels. All started such work at the beginning of their writing careers; all of them had literary ambitions; all felt the same ambivalence about the experience; and--despite their ambivalence--all gained some measure of satisfaction.

Like the others, Louisa May Alcott turned to writing popular fiction when she was unknown and poor. Despite the cultural richness of her childhood in Concord, Massachusetts, where she was born in 1832, by mid-century the family poverty was extreme. Gone were the days when she romped freely with the children of Ralph Waldo Emerson, went berrying with Henry Thoreau, or had glimpses of Nathaniel Hawthorne in the nearby Old Manse. "We all have smallpox...Poor as poverty but bound to make things go," she confided in her diary in 1850. And "bound," to succeed, indeed, she was. Alcott was prepared to do anything respectable to support herself and to help pay her family's bills. Stoutly she vowed, "I will make a battering-ram of my head and make a way through this rough-and-tumble world." And make her way she did. In 1851, at nineteen, she worked as a servant, a

DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP V. 57 N. 6 Whole No. 594 Dec, 1988
(USPS 157-140) ISSN 0012-2874

Published six times per year at 87 School St., Fall River, MA 02720-3425. Edward T. LeBlanc, editor, same address to whom new and renewal subscriptions, address changes and advertising should be sent. Subscription, \$10 per year. Ad rates: 15 cents per word, \$3.00 per column inch: \$6 per quarter page, \$10 per half page, \$20 per full page. Inside and back page, \$25 ea. Second class postage paid at Fall River MA 02720-9998. Postmaster: send form 3579 to 87 School St., Fall River, MA 02720-3425.

second girl, for seven weeks during which she shoveled snow, cleaned boots, and washed dishes--all for the munificent sum of \$4.00. Her family, outraged at the indignity, returned the money. Author Madeleine Stern believes Alcott's own anger at this experience is vented in her blood and thunder tales.

Alcott subsequently became a seamstress, a governess, a servant again for a summer, and a teacher. Her diaries for 1851 and 1852 continue to reflect the family poverty. "Poor as rats and apparently quite forgotten by everyone but the Lord," she wrote in 1851, and the following year she described as "Hard Times." Life was so bleak, she even contemplated suicide.

Fortunately, however, she began to write. Her earliest published works were a poem and a story, both published in *Peterson's Magazine*. By the following year, 1853, she described some improvement in the family affairs: "slowly coming out of the slough of despond," she confided in her diary. And she kept on writing, despite a six week job as a nurse during the Civil War, an experience from which she was "brought home nearly dead." After her painful recovery, she turned once again to writing.

In January 1863 her first blood and thunder tale appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, and for the next four years others appeared in *The Flag of Our Union*, and *Ten Cent Novelettes of Standard Authors*. Then once more she fell ill from overwork. "In December I fell sick having worked too hard. Shut up from December to May," she wrote in her diary for 1867. However, with the publication of *Little Women* in 1868 and 1869, her days as an unknown writer came to an end. Nevertheless, Alcott was to continue writing sensational stories, either anonymously or under a pseudonym, long after she became famous.

Horatio Alger, like Louisa May Alcott also born in 1832 was to become involved in the later nineteenth-century's burning controversy over sensational fiction, a debate in which Alcott added fuel to the fire--publicly disparaging sensational stories, while simultaneously and anonymously publishing them.

Alger's life, now finally set straight by the recent excellent biography by Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales, portrays Alger as a bright youth, who became a Phi Beta Kappa scholar at Harvard, won four essay prizes there, (two of them in Greek composition), and graduated eighth out of eighty-eight students in 1856, thus culminating what were to be the four happiest years of his life.

From 1857 to 1860, Alger attended the Harvard Divinity School, having decided to follow in his

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father's footsteps and become a minister. Four years after his graduation, after traveling in Europe and settling for awhile in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was called to the First Unitarian Church in Brewster, where the renowned Rev. Edward Everett Hale took a chief role in his ordination ceremony.

The story of the Brewster years, now well known, ended abruptly two years later, in 1866, when Alger was dismissed from his position due to "the abominable and revolting crime of unnatural familiarity with boys."

Events thus propelled him into a new career. He left behind him this sordid chapter in pedophilia, went to New York City, began to write for boys and make a living, and--since the Brewster affair was never publicized--he became private tutor to some distinguished Jewish New York families: the five sons of banker Joseph Seligman and the young Benjamin Cardozo, later Supreme Court justice, experiences which make the anti-semitism in his writings inexplicable.

As a writer for juveniles, Alger became immediately successful. In fact, his work was more popular in 1869 than in 1899. He wrote initially for Joseph Allen's *Student and Schoolmate*; then when it collapsed in 1872, he became a regular contributor to Street and Smith, who praised Alger in their *New York Weekly* as "the gifted author, an attractive card."

Street and Smith grabbed up tales from Alger's pen, and Alger began to create more violent plots as he continued writing for the *Weekly*. Many of his stories and poems, like "Friar Anselmo," were ones Allen had formerly spurned because they were based on murder, suicide, insanity, and greed. Robert Bonner, editor of the *Ledger*, to whom Alger also offered his sensational stories, declined them, too.

Alger's entrance into the blood and thunder school of writing marked an important turn of events. Sensationalism now became *de rigeur* in popular fiction, and he became a leading figure involved in the burning debate over this issue.

When Theodore Dreiser, who was thirty-nine years younger than both Alcott and Alger, began his career in the dime novel world and applied for a job at Street and Smith in 1904, he was at a critical point in his life. He had just recovered from a searing nervous breakdown and had previously been employed as a plumber's helper and as a laborer on a railroad. Like Alcott, he, too, had contemplated suicide, but, fortunately for American literature, he was deterred by a tipsy bystander.

Beginning in 1900, Dreiser's world had begun to fall apart. He had written *Sister Carrie*, one of our greatest American novels, but because it had an

"immoral" heroine, the work was an early twentieth-century failure, too far ahead of its time. Doubleday published it, as required by the contract, but never advertised it nor boosted its sale. The first edition simply died. Dreiser was devastated. His resultant breakdown and poignant account of his life in this period is described in the recently published *An Amateur Laborer*. Because of his "failure," he wrote, "I was like a fish drawn out of its native water to die in the air."

Ironically, it was Street and Smith publishing house that returned him to writing. On August 10, 1904 he heard from his friend, Richard Duffy, an editor there, that the firm had an opening for an assistant editor of boys' libraries at \$15 a week. Within ten days, Dreiser was on the job and stayed there for nearly two years.

He was entirely familiar with publications from the dime novel world. Earlier in his life, in 1881, as a lad of ten in Evansville, Illinois, he had begun to read the family story papers which were thrown over his fence each week. In his autobiographical *Dawn* and the manuscripts associated with it, he expressed his enthusiasm for these romantic periodicals and dime novels to which he soon became addicted. "I began to see what a wild place the world was and how wonderful," he explained. He attested to the impact they made on his imagination and the development of his own writing.

The evidence that Dreiser even wrote dime novels while he was at Street and Smith first came to light four years ago when I discovered a list, in his own handwriting, of important "Literary Experiences" he had had. Second on that list is the entry: "Street & Smith Diamond Dick." A careful study of 129 *Diamond Dick, Jr.* dime novels, published while Dreiser was at the firm provides significant evidence that he wrote some of them.

Thus like Alcott and Alger before him, Dreiser entered the popular fiction world at an important time in his young life and also supported himself by writing in that genre.

Upton Sinclair, entered that same popular fiction world, when, like Alcott, he was only nineteen, shortly before his graduation from the City College of New York.

In 1895 he began to write for *Argosy* and continued until 1901. In 1897, however, having just entered graduate school at Columbia University, he also began to write for Street and Smith, an association he enjoyed until 1900. Between June 1897 and November 1898, he wrote sixty-one Mark Mallory tales in *Army and Navy Weekly*, twenty-eight Clif Faraday tales for

True Blue Library, and probably for Half Holiday and Starry Flag Weekly as well. Simultaneously, Sinclair was writing 30,000 to 40,000 words for Columbia Library. Even in dime novel writing terms, this was a prodigious amount of writing. "At the climax," Sinclair said, "I figured that I was turning out 8,000 words a day."

In addition to sharing mutual experiences at the beginning of their popular fiction writing careers, these four authors also shared a common goal; they all had serious literary ambitions. All of them desired to write The Great American Novel, and three of them succeeded. Louisa May Alcott was always interested in writing; even as a child she wrote melodramas for her friends and loved writing plays. In 1860 a farce she wrote was staged in Boston. Alger's literary ambition doubtlessly stemmed from his Harvard undergraduate days when he was recognized for his essay writing.

Of the four authors, however, Alger was the only one to fail to reach his goal. Probably he made too much money writing juvenile stories at the beginning of his career. In 1869, for example, he earned \$3500--equivalent to a modern day \$35,000. In the 1880's he wrote some successful biographies for boys: on the recently assassinated President Garfield in 1881, and others on Abraham Lincoln and Daniel Webster. His achievements in this genre dampened somewhat the debate that swirled around his sensational fiction. Nevertheless, he stopped writing biographies because they involved "much more labor than ordinary serials." Perhaps because he settled for the easier route, as Scharnhorst remarks, at fifty Alger "had already entered the twilight of a low trajectory career."

Among the four, Dreiser was unique in that he had already written the great American novel before he entered the dime novel publishing world, and, it was because of the fate of that novel's first edition that he took up dime novel writing.

As a result of *Sister Carrie*, no publisher would touch him; his magazine articles were rejected in droves. The Diamond Dick, Jr. serials thus became the major outlet for his creative talents for nearly two years. This surely is one of American literature's most ironic footnotes--that the author of *Sister Carrie* forged his re-entry into the creative writing world through a healing process which involved the blood and thunder adventures of a dime novel sheriff hero.

Lastly, like Alcott and Dreiser, Upton Sinclair also produced the great American novel, in 1906, the same year that Dreiser's second and successful edition of *Sister Carrie* appeared. Sinclair's novel, *Jungle*, became the first work in American literature to depict

the horrors of factory life in all its poverty, disease, and despair.

From their popular fiction writing, all of these authors also learned something about writing style. According to Madeleine Stern, Alcott's sensational stories are "peopled with characters of flesh and blood," and "suspenseful and skillfully executed" "well paced" plots. Thus it would seem that from her earliest ventures, Alcott learned something about character and plot development. Perhaps what Alger learned was the power of concentration, for, although he never became the writer of his dreams, he learned to write in chaos. Given the clamor of a room full of talking newsboys or his rambunctious tutorial charges, he could produce a chapter a day. As Scharnhorst remarked succinctly, "quiet unsettled him."

For Dreiser and Sinclair one of the most important elements of writing that Street and Smith advocated was to locate real life stories in the daily newspapers which could become the essence of fiction. It is possible that due to this early training both Dreiser and Sinclair wrote some novels about real incidents. Dreiser's *The Financier* (1912) was based on the career of Charles T. Yerkes and, perhaps, his great work, *American Tragedy* (1925) was developed from a criminal case history in which a young man killed his lover in order to marry a rich girl. Sinclair's *Jungle* was also founded on his observations and research about Chicago factory life at the turn of the century.

The third major common element in their popular fiction writing lives was that all four authors were ambivalent about the early days of their writing careers. The most positive factor was the pay was good for such little effort; their negative opinions varied.

Exclaimed Alcott in a letter to her friend Alf Whitman, 22 June 1862:

I intend to illuminate the Ledger with a blood and thunder tale as they are easy to 'compose' and are better paid than moral and elaborate works of Shakespeare so dont (sic) be shocked if I send you a paper containing a picture of Indians, pirates, wolves, bears, and distressed damsels in a grand tableau over a little like "The Maniac Bride" or "The Bath of Blood, a Thrilling Tale of Passion."

Alcott's negative reaction to sensational fiction came in a story, "Eight Cousins," which was published

in St. Nicholas in August 1875. She referred to sensational stories as "optional delusions," thus jabbing at William Adams, "Oliver Optic," was, like Alger, had become the focus of the stormy debate over blood and thunder stories. Obviously, Alcott's refusal to sign her name to her own tales indicated she was less than proud of them.

Writing stories for boys gave Horatio Alger a didactic purpose in life, and he enjoyed the role of teacher. His aim was to teach boys how to succeed though filial piety and effort. Writing to his friend Francis S. Street in 1879, Alger explained: "In all my stories and books I have labored to induce boys to rise in the world by precisely the same means which have helped you to rise."

During the debate on sensational fiction, Alger received praise from such a distinguished librarian as S. S. Green, head of the Public Library of Worcester, Massachusetts, who rose to Alger's defense. In addressing the question of whether it was "proper" to have sensational stories for the young in public libraries, Green elevated Alger to a position above reproach by explaining: "Mr. Alger is a son of a clergyman, and himself a graduate of Harvard College and the Divinity School at Cambridge," To the much criticized Alger, such a comment must have been welcome. Despite Green's support, however, his library dropped Alger's books in 1902. In the debate about sensational fiction, Green also maintained that dime novels "are not immoral. The objection to them is that they are bloody and very exciting."

Despite Alger's positive feelings about writing sensational stories, three years before his death he disparaged the kind of writing he had done all his life. In the *Writer* in 1896, he commented:

Sensational stories, such as are found in dime and half-dime libraries, do much harm, and are very objectionable...Many a boy has been tempted to crime by them... Such stories...do incalculable mischief. Better that a boys' life should be humdrum than filled with such dangerous excitement.

These negative feelings were doubtlessly caused by the controversy over Alger's sensational stories, and in 1896 he was old and tired of the debate. From the 1870's until over twenty years after his death, the public libraries embarked on an anti-Alger crusade. His work, librarians argued, was of poor quality; his heroes "are not boys, but prodigies...capable businessmen and bank officers...(who) leave the impression...they can get along by themselves without

the support and guidance of parents and friends." Furthermore, they said the heroes' meteoric successes made real life expectations impossible, and they blamed Alger for fostering the get-rich-quick mentality. So vehement were their protests, the sale of his books fell and Sunday schools, which had once ordered Alger novels by the thousands, stopped. In 1894, five years before Alger's death, an American Library Association survey revealed that out of 145 libraries in the country, fifty-two either had no Alger books or were phasing them out by attrition.

Even for Dreiser, who frequently disparaged his dime novel days, there must have been some positive memories. It is significant that on his "Literary Experiences" fragment, his words "Street & Smith---Diamond Dick" comprise the second of fourteen experiences listed, some of which had preceded his days as a dime novelist. Also Dreiser had planned to write a book about all these experiences and, as late as 1920, wrote his friend, H. L. Mencken about the work. "Ah, the opportunity that lies there, my good brother---the nobles of the nineties and 1910." Unfortunately, for reasons no one knows, Dreiser abandoned this project.

Although Dreiser never alluded to his dime novel days in his writing, his sources for his negative feelings about those days can be found in the comments of Mencken and his earliest biographer, Robert Elias. They both base their similar accounts on what Dreiser told them. Mencken described him as: "a Grub Street hack," "in the very slum of letter," where "he labored with tongue in cheek" reducing 60,000 word dime novels to 30,000 words apiece--"cutting each one into halves, and writing a new ending for the first half and a new beginning for the second half."

Like the others, Upton Sinclair's positive feelings about his dime novel writing experience came from the fact that it provided him with an income. "I was happy to be able to support my mother during the years my father was sinking deeper into alcoholism," he once recalled.

Sinclair strained, however, at the drudgery of it all. "From 1899 to 1901...was the period I hated doing pot boilers," he remembered. He despaired that, although he wanted to move on to more serious subjects, the public was only interested in nickel novels.

The fourth major experience these authors shared is that they all, each in their own way, got satisfying results from their popular fiction writing days.

For Alcott, the primary satisfaction came from the knowledge that her sensational stories would help

support herself and pay the family's bills. Her delight is reflected in her diary entries. In 1865 she confided, "Began to feel rich for stories were asked for faster than I could write them and my dreams of supporting the family seemed to be coming true at last." Four years later she remembered, "Sick all winter and wrote nothing but little tales for Ford Fuller and Leslie. Paid father's and mother's board as well as my own." From her first thriller in January 1863, "Pauline's Passion and Punishment" in Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* through "A Modern Mephistopheles," published in 1877, she continued to fascinate the public with tales of madness, manipulating heroes and heroines, opium addiction, hashish experimentation, mind control, and Gothic romances. Her stories appeared anonymously or under her pseudonym, A. M. Barnard in Leslie's, *The Flag of Our Union and Ten Cent Novelettes of Standard Authors*. Surely she must also have enjoyed such moments as when her Concord friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, deplored the "yellow-covered literature of the Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., stamp," while her anonymous story, "V. V. or, Plots and Counterplots," was appearing in the *Flag*.

Similarly, Alger also enjoyed making the money without undue effort. He received satisfaction, too, from providing boys with good role models and in stimulating their love of adventure. His publishers, not yet mentioned, included Munsey, Lovell, A. L. Burt, F. M. Lupton, Norman Munro, Arthur Westbrook, and Frank Leslie. Alger also enjoyed the praise he did receive despite the controversy over his sensational stories: Thomas Wolfe apparently read him, two of his tales were translated and published in Russia, and in 1896 the *Independent* praised him for his "clever trick of turning incidents to account."

For Dreiser there was the satisfaction that comes from working among friends: his editors, Richard Duffy and Henry Harrison Lewis, as well as his fellow dime novelists, Frederick Dey, George Jenks, and Ernest Jarrold, known as "Mickey Finn." His letters to and from these colleagues or his references to them in *Newspaper Days* testify to his regard.

And finally, for Upton Sinclair his days as a dime novelist provided him with a favorite boast---that his total output was the equivalent of the complete work of Sir Walter Scott.

Thus we can see that as the early careers of writers who would become important in American literature intersected with the story paper and dime novel world---ambivalent though they were about the experience---it was one from which everyone got something.

THE END

RETROSPECTIVE NOTES

By A Literary Detective

Despite the brief notice in Mary Noel's *Villains Galore* (Note 1) and the short article "Jones' Publishing House", by Timothy D. Murray, (Note 2) very little biographical details seem to exist for the printer-publisher-author, Justin Jones, whose most famous pseudonym was "Harry Hazel."

The National Union Catalogue of Pre-1956 Imprints gives neither birth date nor death date of Justin Jones, thus offering few clues as to where to begin to look for biographical data on this well-known former story paper author of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, the following obituary notice (Note 3) should prove of interest to those researchers of "old time" authors who may wish to delve further into the life of Justin Jones.

"Mr. Justin Jones, who died at Cromwell, Conn, yesterday, at the age of seventy-four years, was a native of Maine, born in Brunswick, Oct. 4, 1814. He was apprenticed to the printer of the town, and when about seventeen came to Boston, where he was the proprietor of the Boston Pearl and Literary Gazette, a semi-monthly literary paper. The Pearl was subsequently transferred to Hartford. After a year or two in Hartford, Mr. Jones went to Greenfield, (Note 4) where he became connected with the Gazette and Courier. In 1836, he went West and settled in Cleveland, establishing himself there in the book business and subsequently in the printing business and printing the Cleveland Daily Herald during the early years of its existence. After three or four years he returned to Boston (Note 5) where he subsequently became connected with various publications as printer, writer and proprietor. Some of these were the *Flag of Our Union*, *The Hesperus*, *The Yankee Privateer* and more recently *The Yankee Blade*, the latter of which he sold a few years ago. In 1851 and 1852 he was elected as a Whig to the lower house of the General Court from East Cambridge, and refused to join the coalition by which Charles Sumner was elected United States senator. In 1859, 1860 and 1861 he represented the old Ward 10 in the Common Council. After 1861, he was for several years a member of the Board of Directors for Public Institutions. During more than thirty years of his life he was a prolific writer of fiction under the nom de plume "Harry Hazel" (Note 6). In 1865 Mr. Jones removed to Brookline, where he has since lived. He leaves a widow and five sons and two daughters. His widow is the eldest daughter of the late Sylvester Allen of Greenfield and a sister to Judge Charles

Allen of the State Supreme Bench."

NOTES

1. Noel, Mary Villains Galore...The Heyday of the Popular Story Weekly (New York, 1954), p. 45-48
2. Dzwonkoski, Peter (ed.) American Literary Publishing Houses, 1638-1899, Part I: A-M (Detroit, 1986), p. 231
3. Boston Evening Transcript, Feb. 20, 1889
4. Justin Jones married Sarah Franklin Allen, the daughter of Sylvester and Harriet Allen, in Greenfield October 14, 1836. She was born in that city June 2, 1818. See Vital Statistics of Greenfield, Massachusetts to 1850 (Boston, 1915)
5. Stimpson's Boston Directory for 1840 shows that Justin Jones was in partnership with Henry J. Prentiss in the printing firm, Prentiss & Jones at 11 Devonshire Street.
6. The pseudonym was not a secret for long. A short review of one of "Harry Hazel's" novels appeared in the literary section of the Odd-Fellow periodical *The Symbol*, Vol. III, No. 11 (Dec. 1, 1844), p. 522:

"The Belle of Boston; or, The Rival Students of Cambridge, by Harry Hazel. Author of "Burglars; or, The Mysteries of the League of Honor. Boston, F. Gleason.

If the popularity of a work is a certain indication of merit, "The Belle of Boston" would take the precedence of all other novelettes of the day. Two immense editions--in all 20,000 copies--have been issued from the press, and although scarcely two weeks have elapsed since the publication they are nearly all sold. As considerable inquiry has been made who "Harry Hazel" is, we would inform them that Patriarch Justin Jones, of Bunker Hill Encampment must answer to the appellation. We trust Bro. Jones will excuse us for bringing his name before the public. He must bear in mind that it was a "secret" out of the "Camp."

THE END

Send \$1.00 for large list of dime novels for sale. \$1.00 will be refunded with first purchase. If you have special wants, I will try to accommodate with a listing of what I have for sale.

Edward T LeBlanc, 87 School St., Fall River, MA 02720

LETTERS

Dear Mr. LeBlanc:

While reading Theodore Roosevelt's *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888), I ran across a reference to dime novels which may be of interest to DNR readers.

The book tells of Roosevelt's adventures on his ranch in the Badlands. One chapter contains his account of how he and two men from his ranch tracked three men from a neighboring ranch who had stolen their rowboat. The men were "hard characters," suspected of being horse thieves, and were captured in the wilds, over a week's journey from civilization. Because of the bitter cold, their hands and feet could not be tied (for fear of frostbite), and consequently, they were kept under close guard, usually under orders to remain lying down. In describing their situation, Roosevelt includes the following passage:

Indeed, if the time was tedious to us, it must have seemed never ending to our prisoners, who had nothing to do but to lie still and read, or chew the bitter cud of their reflections, always conscious that some pair of eyes was watching them every moment, and that at least one loaded rifle was ever ready to be used against them. They had quite a stock of books, some of a rather unexpected kind. Dime novels and the inevitable "History of the James Brothers"--a book that, together with the "Police Gazette," is to be found in the hands of every professed or putative ruffian in the West--seemed perfectly in place; but it was somewhat surprising to find that a large number of more or less drearily silly "society" novels, ranging from Ouida's to those of The Duchess and Augusta J. Evans, were most greedily devoured.

Roosevelt doesn't mention whether the "society novels" were also paper covered (which seems quite possible since all of those authors were available in the paperback libraries), but he does make clear that he had little to do with such reading, noting:

As for me, I had brought with me "Anna Karenina," and my surroundings were quite gray enough to harmonize well with Tolstoi.

What seemed especially notable about the incident was the evidence that dime novels weren't just read by Easterners longing for glimpses of the West, but by the ranchers and cowboys, too. Wonder what they thought of Deadwood Dick and Company?

Deidre Johnson

HOP OFF THE PRESSES

By John M. Enright

Even as (Courtesy of the Easton Press of Norwalk, Connecticut) Canadian story teller Leslie McFarlane's first dozen Hardy Boys adventures have returned to print, so too have some of Howard Garis's Uncle Wiggily tales. While Howard Roger Garis (April 25, 1873 - November 5, 1962) also tinkered with some of the early invention of Mr. Thomas Swift and came out of the bullpen as a long reliever for Baseball Joe, there is no doubt that he was in his element as the bunny's Boswell. The names and playfulness of the various animal characters lent the tales a charm which made Uncle Wiggily Longears a solid success from the moment of his 1910 debut.

As is unfortunately so often the case in this field, Newark Publishers R. F. Fenno took advantage of author GARIS's gold mine so that (as **Maverick** James Garner once said of his dealings with Warners) Fenno got the gold and Garis got the shaft. Later, more remunerative editions came from the reprint house of A. L. Burt with a uniform picture pasted on the cover, with only the title changing. Here, hatless, the character looks less like Uncle Wiggily than Brer Rabbit. Art by Louis Wisa combined cold whites with a rush of red for unsatisfactory results. Later attempts by Edward Bloomfield to not merit a passing grade. Slender though they may be, the Charles Graham editions, with a generous number of color illustrations by Lang Campbell, are the most desirable of these early offerings. However, they seldom come onto the market these days.

But now, through its subsidiary Platt & Munk, Grosset & Dunlap has done much to redeem its good name by treating the masses to two Garis volumes: **Uncle Wiggily's Story Book** (247 pp. \$10. Dust jacket art features a pleasant rendering of Mr. Longears reading his book, the art being by Daniel San Souci) and **Uncle Wiggily and His Friends** (98 pp. \$6. Picture on the hardcover and many interior color illustrations by George Carlson). I yield to no reader in my affection for dust jackets, but in this case the cheaper book is the better buy. As in Michael Bond's **Paddington Bear** stories, a single character may cross the boundary between human and animal characters, but the mixture of large numbers of human and animal participants is perhaps on unworkable format. Such is the case with the story book, which inside can merely boast of a few black and white pictures. The second volume is much closer to the old Graham editions. If Nurse Fuzzy

Wuzzy doesn't look as hilarious here as she did in the Lang Campbell art, all the animals are still quite appealing as George Carlson shows them fixing dinner, driving through the woods, and going upstream in a canoe.

In a day when a new paperback with Nancy Drew standing on the cover in a hot leather skirt costs almost three dollars, paying a little over six dollars (with tax) for Mr. Longears isn't too bad a deal.

And so, after traveling "many weary miles," Uncle Wiggily has returned at last, not as nostalgia, because for many readers he will be a new acquaintance; not as a vehicle to promote the sale of toys, though at one time his board game outsold every other; but rather as entertainment with a magic which transcends fans and operates on its own power, without the help of critics. While critics in their ivory towers imagine that they can set the tone and tastes for each generation, once defying Dreiser, later flooding unwarranted publicity onto Norman Failure, in truth it is for readers to announce the verdict and it is for history to examine the judgment. And generation after generation, Uncle Wiggily Longears has hopped happily along, leaving the omniscient critics' pets in the dust.

THE END

SOME GILBERT PATTEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STORY PAPER PRESS

Compiled by Stanley A. Pachon

My Unseen Double, by Gilbert Patten

Comfort, Apr. 1894 (Vol. 6 No. 6)

(April winner 2nd prize in short story
Submission)

My Friend the Burglar, by Gilbert Patten

Comfort, Oct. 1895 (Vol. 7 No. 12)

(4th prize. Story submitted from Camden,
Maine)

"Small Shakes" by William G. Patten

Yankee Blade, Feb. 2, 1889 (No. 2553)

The Mad Cannibal, by William G. Patten

Yankee Blade, Apr. 5, 1890 (No. 2614)

A Good Nights Work, by William G. Patten

Yankee Blade, July 12, 1890 (No. 2628)

The Terrible Truth, A Tale of Speculation

Yankee Blade, Dec. 6, 1890 (No. 2649)

(Chapter 4 in this issue, evidently a
serialization)

Old Mr. Ike. A Story of Christmas Money

by William G. Patten

Yankee Blade, Dec. 27, 1890 (No. 2652)

The Blind Organ Grinder, by William G. Patten

Yankee Blade, Apr. 16, 1892 (No. 2719)

Gilbert Patten also authored the comic strip "Jack Lockwell's Adventures. It only last one year, 1927

THE END

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